III. Remarks

A. Claim Cancellation

Non-elected claims 1-15 and 28-35 have been canceled.

B. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102

The Action rejects claims 16-17, 19, 21-22, 24-25 and 27 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,735,092 to Clayton et al. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Clayton describes a method of manufacturing a product having a foam core. Clayton forms a foam composition 40 from a foamable polymer liquid, such as polyurethane. (Col. 6, Lines 33-52). Isocyanate from reservoir 31 and polyol components from reservoir 32 are mixed to form the foamable polyurethane, which is deposited on conveyed gypsum board 14. The foam then rises until it contacts the facer 15 to the upper belt 24. (Col. 6, Lines 50-52). The intermediate product is then heated to cure the polymer (i.e., polyurethane). (Col. 6, Lines 55-59).

Applicants' Claim 16 is directed to a method of manufacturing an insulation product. Claim 16 recites the step of "forming a web of randomly oriented fibers on a forming belt, said fibers being coated with a heat curable binder, said web generally having a first major surface and a second major surface and a pair of side portions." Clayton does not teach the formation of a "web of randomly oriented fibers" that are "coated with a heat curable binder." The foam composition 40 is a foam, which is generally a sponge-like polymer full of open or closed cell pores, not "a web of randomly oriented **fibers**." Further, claim 16 requires that the fibers are "coated with a heat curable binder." Since Clayton does not teach a web of fibers, it cannot teach fibers coated with a heat curable binder. Indeed, in Clayton, the foam itself, i.e., the polyurethane, is cured.

Claim 16 also recites that the fiber web has a "higher percentage by weight of said heat curable binder in a region of said web proximate to at least one of said major surfaces compared with a total percentage by weight of said binder in said web." Again, as discussed above, Clayton's foam 40 does not have a heat curable binder as claimed that is coated onto fibers of a fibrous web. Clayton, therefore, cannot teach this limitation. Still further, the Examiner provides no citation in the Action to where or how Clayton teaches a "higher percentage by weight of said heat curable binder in a region of said web proximate to at least one of said major surfaces compared with a total percentage by weight of said binder in said web." Putting aside for the moment that Clayton does not teach fibers coated with a binder as claimed, the foam composition 40 of Clayton appears to be a homogenous composition, meaning there is no difference in its composition between the region proximate to the upper or lower surface and the composition as a whole.

Finally, claim 16 recites affixing a facing layer to said at least one of said major surfaces of said sheet [i.e., to the major surface proximate the area with the higher percentage by weight of the heat curable binder] and "wherein a region of said sheet proximate to said facing layer is more puncture resistant than a remainder of said sheet." As discussed above, Clayton's foam core, which the Examiner apparently equates to the claimed insulation sheet, is a homogenous structure. Therefore, there is no reason why a region of the core proximate to the facing layer would be more puncture resistant than a remainder of the core. Indeed, the Examiner provides no support in the Action in the form of citation to Clayton for this feature.

For at least these reasons, it is submitted that Clayton clearly fails to teach several limitations of claim 16. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claim 16 is not anticipated by Clayton and is allowable over the cited reference. Claims 17, 19, 21-22, 24-25 and 27 depend from claim 16 and are, therefore, also not anticipated by Clayton and are allowable thereover.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 16-17, 19, 21-22, 24-25 and 27 are respectfully requested.

C. **Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103**

The Action rejects claims 18, 20, 23 and 26 as being obvious from Clayton. Claims 18, 20, 23 and 26 depend from claim 16 and are, therefore, allowable for at least the reasons set forth above in connection with claim 16. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of these claims are respectfully requested.

D. **New Claims**

New claims 36-45 are presented, including independent claims 36 and 45. Examination and allowance of these claims are respectfully requested.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing remarks and amendments, Applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance at an early date, which action is earnestly solicited.

The Commissioner for Patents is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees or credit any excess payment that may be associated with this communication to deposit account **04-1679**.

Respectfully submitted,

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